

BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

1955

All matters relative to your room and board, mail, and any charges you may incur (apart from the regular bill for tuition, board and room) should be referred to Mr. Donovan, Resident Manager, at the INN DESK.

For details regarding the management of the School, please make inquiry at the DIRECTOR'S OFFICE. All matters pertaining to your initial registration and payment of bills, information about courses, lectures, and graduate credit should be referred to the SECRETARY'S OFFICE. Director R. L. Cook and Miss Lillian Becker, Secretary, are the staff to whom you should bring your request for information about details of the School.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Students should obtain confirmation of their courses from the Secretary's Office as soon after arrival at Bread Loaf as possible. Students who have not completed registration of courses in advance must personally consult with the Director. Appointments may be made with Miss Becker. Students should make a copy for themselves of their class schedules.

A recorder will be in the Blue Parlor on June 29. Registration is not completed until a registration card and a "notify in case of accident" card have been returned to the recorder. Please be sure to fill in the registration card on both sides.

A representative of the College Treasurer's Office will be in the Blue Parlor on Wednesday, June 29. It is requested that all bills which have not been paid be attended to at this time. Receipts for bills paid in advance may be obtained from the Treasurer at this time.

Please keep in mind the fact that if you wish to change your status from that of a non-credit student to that of a credit student or vice versa in any course, this change must be made on or before July 4. All changes in courses must be made with the approval of the Director. For a change from one course to another, after July 4. a charge of one dollar will be made. All persons desiring to visit classes in which they are not enrolled must also obtain permission from the Director.

MAIL SCHEDULE

Outgoing mail must be posted not later than 8:30 A.M. and 1:30 P.M. Mail will be ready for distribution at the following hours: 10:00 A.M. and 3:30 P.M.

MEAL HOURS

In a day or two the regular seating plan will go into effect. There will be one seating. Please consult the chart on the dining room door to ascertain your table assignments.

Daily

Breakfast 7:30-8:00 A. M.
Luncheon 12:45-1:00 P. M.
Dinner 6:00-6:15 P. M.

Sunday

Breakfast 8:00-8:30 A. M.
Dinner 1:00-1:30 P. M.
Supper 6:00-6:30 P. M.

Since most of the waiters and waitresses are students, it is urgently requested that all students come to meals promptly, especially to breakfast, so that those who are waiting on table may be able to reach their classes on time. In the morning the door will be closed at 8:00. No students may be served breakfast after that time. Please do not ask the head waiter to make exceptions to this regulation. He has no authority to do so.

SUPPLIES

Stationery, notebook paper, pencils, ink, etc., may be purchased at the Bookstore, post cards at the Front Desk, and cigarettes at the Snack Bar. It is impossible for credit to be extended, so please do not ask for it.

BOOKSTORE

It is urgently requested that students purchase their texts immediately because it is frequently necessary for us to order additional copies. It is impossible to allow students to maintain charge accounts at the Bookstore, and we hope that students will cooperate by not asking for any favors of this kind. The hours when the Bookstore will be open will be announced soon.

BREAD LOAF PARKING REGULATIONS

A preliminary notice concerning parking has been made in the bulletin. New and stringently enforced state laws prohibit the parking of cars on the side of the highway, and it is requested that students and guests endeavor to keep the roads clear in front of the Inn. Students living in Maple may park their cars in the space behind the cottage; students at Tamarack on the lawn under the trees by the main road. All others should use the parking space near the Barn.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT EVENING PROGRAMS

An informal reception of faculty and students will be held at the Recreation Hall in the Barn on Wednesday evening, June 29 at 8:30 P. M.

Mr. Robert Frost will give a lecture-reading at 8:15 P. M. on Thursday, June 30, in the Little Theatre.

THE ROAD TAKEN

Opening talk at the English School, June 29, 1955

R.L. Cook, Director

I don't know who is first responsible for what has proved to be a very popular allusion. I think I first encountered it in a statement by Dr. Erwin Panofsky of Princeton University on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the English School in 1945. Dr. Panofsky referred to Bread Loaf as the "magic mountain," bearing in mind, of course, the title of Thomas Mann's Nobel Prize-winning novel. It is an effective allusion so long as one dissociates oneself from the novel. Bread Loaf as a magic mountain is a more piquant than exact term. Mann's hero Hans Castorp - "life's delicate child" - was bemused on his magic mountain at Davos Platz. Here we are not bemused; at least I hope that we are not. Not certainly when we are challenged by fresh, vigorous ideas, nor when the seriousness of our intention to cultivate the humane letters is so well-grounded in thirty-five years of continuous effectiveness.

Here, this evening, I want to explain what road we have chosen to take educationally. First of all, we emphatically reject the road of fads and fashions. We would be different at Bread Loaf, but we would make the difference a naturalness native to the ground we stand on. Here form fits function in a sense other than architectural. Here the form of educational discipline fits the function of the intellectual and moral needs of the individual. In sum, the English School does exist to satisfy the needs of each student. And in education as elsewhere where there is a felt need there is also a reasonable hope of fulfilling it.

In arranging our curriculum two coordinate attitudes have been kept in mind - the stabilizing and the innovative. In his brilliant short study of the eighteenth century, The Heavenly City, Carl Becker underscores the first attitude - the stabilizing one - in a statement which I find applicable here.

Becker says: "We wish neither to break with the past nor to hold fast to it, but to make use of it; we wish to disengage from it those ideas, customs, and institutions which are so widely distributed and so persistent in human experience that they may be regarded as embodying those 'constants and universal principles of human nature' upon which we may rely for establishing a more equitable regime than that which now exists." For regime substitute curriculum. It isn't a more equitable regime that concerns us; it is a substantial curriculum. We are interested in including in the curriculum a group of stabilizing courses in the great tradition, like the history of the English Language and Chaucer, the seventeenth century and Milton, Victorian and Modern Poetry. These courses give us an idea of how literature has come to be what it is and what it has to say about the nature of the world and the destiny of man. They are the spinal column of the curriculum; the basics in humane letters.

There is also an innovative force at work, one which is seen best in the various approaches which the teacher and the writer reflect, the former in the courses of instruction, the latter in the ways and means he has found to interpret experience. Sometimes the approaches are refined from previous epochs; sometimes they are newly devised by ingenious writers. Naturalism and symbolism in our time have influenced the teaching of drama, fiction and poetry, and their impact upon the content of our curriculum is decisive. And everyone here knows what effect the New Criticism and the New Critics have had upon us.

Science confirms as it inspires Wallace Stevens' assertion that "we live in an old chaos of the sun." Here we try for a little area of order in the old unchanging chaos. Our little area of order is like a clearing which stands between the turbulence of John Dewey's progressivism and the volubility of Dr. Hutchin's Great Conversation - a clearing where students of literature are welcomed

to come to test a capacity for meeting the challenge of ideas in literature by observation, association, reflection and emotion.

But how is a stabilizing and innovative curriculum joined to our educational objective of cultivating the humane letters? What is our general aim if not that of 'the humanities'? I am using 'humanities' in its original sense when history, philosophy and literature chiefly were regarded as studies worthy of a free man in his intellectual and moral development. What is the goal of the humanities if it is not to describe the world of reality and in describing its impact upon us to intensify the depth and increase the breadth of our awareness? The significance of the humanities - and particularly literature - is psychological. And literature as an expression of the humanities is what man makes out of experience, sizing it up, as it were; envisioning it, saving it, so that we can really understand how and what we have lived in order the better to live. The latter is the moral part. The poetic part of literature is the touch of experience at the quick. In its luminosity it is a medium through which things are to be seen and the whole to be evoked in the light of the part, as in "Lear" or the "Inferno" or "Samson Agonistes". Moreover as one of the necessities of the spirit, poetry is not only a token of our survival, it is a means. The clear resonance of the poetic voice, like larksong at sun-up, drops through time and space as though there was no interval. The poet being moved moves us.

What have educators found in the humanities that lead them to insist that they should be necessary parts of an educational discipline? The answer is, I think, in a word borrowed from Nietzsche - 'perspectival'. The humanities are what we come up through - our history, our philosophy, our literature. They function best then as integrators in a general educational curriculum that tends by its copious offerings to atomize and separate knowledge into fields. The humanities

keep central the fact that knowledge is one, that no matter how disparate the parts are there is a 'perspectival' unity. It is for this reason that the humanities represent one of the conditions under which the human being can be free and enlightened. But it is a condition which must be met by the individual alone. And so it is that we allude to 'the breath of knowledge', an effective metaphor because no one can breathe for another, no one can know for certain what another has to realize in himself in order to live.

The world to be free in is the world of the mind, and it seems to me if any where it is at this point that the scientist and the poet can meet, even as the saint and the statesman. True, the world of abstract reality Dirac or Einstein see in their mind's eye and capture in exact mathematical formulae is different from the world of flesh-and-blood reality that Dylan Thomas and William Butler Yeats feel and evoke in the precise language of poetry's metaphoric eloquence. And yet although the approach of the scientist and the poet differ, their relationship to knowledge is complementary. In one of the Bampton Lectures, delivered at Columbia University in 1952, Dr. Conant, then president of Harvard University, discussed science and spiritual values. Using Job as his litmus, he tested a fundamental question: "Can those value judgments that do not now involve scientific concepts be replaced in principle by those that have originated in scientific investigations?" His considered opinion was "no." He contended that our ethical principles and moral convictions cannot be replaced by "concepts growing out of experiment and observation." The values Dr. Conant had in mind are passion, love, friendliness, self-sacrifice, the desire to mitigate human suffering. These values sound remarkably like "the old verities and truths of the heart" to which Faulkner referred in his Stockholm Speech in 1950, and to which Hawthorne referred collectively in the preface to The House of the Seven Gables as 'the truth of

the human heart'.

"Scientific theories are guides to the action of scientists which gradually become part of our common sense ideas about the material universe," said Dr. Conant. "They have little or no bearing on the age-old problem of good and evil. I would attach meaning to Job's vision, but a symbolic meaning. Inquiries into the nature of this meaning would be inquiries about what I have called spiritual values." Now this is where the humanities - specifically literature - declares itself. At the higher level it is directly concerned with the symbolic meanings in human experience and it is concerned with the truths of the human heart that complement the truths of empirical science. Consider for instance Moby Dick. When read with imagination and sensitive insight we see beneath the agitated surface of this "bowl of salt" what W.H.Auden describes as "an immediate meaning and a possible meaning." For this book has one of the most extensive refractive surfaces in American literature. Both the truth of fact and the truth of imagination are embodied in Moby Dick in communicable narrative form. Yet Melville isn't trying to substitute an imagined for an actual picture. He is trying to give us a selective interpretation of human experience, recreating experience in narrative whose significance is poetic and expansive.

In making experience understandable, Melville makes it livable. He recharges our interest in life so that, like Emily Dickinson, we exclaim: "To have been made alive is so chief a thing, all else inevitably adds." Moby Dick, The Brothers Karamazov, The Magic Mountain, War and Peace, Wuthering Heights and Lord Jim make us realize that literature is at times not only a game of make-believe that turns out to be a reality but the embodiment of the terms of man's appeal from his insignificance in the world's mystery and immensity. In literature the unusual geniuses take stands and assert themselves for mankind, presenting

the affidavits of our qualifications, deposition of our acts, statements of our intercommunicability. Moby Dick clarifies the appeal of man from both his presumption (if, as Dr. Conant says, the universe is explicable in human terms) and from his insignificance (if, as Bertrand Russell says, "man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving.")

All of this may be true you probably think, but where do we come in? Since we are readers and teachers of books, what is the writer's relationship to us? In short, on what grounds do writers and teachers meet? It is upon the common ground as human beings who are reluctant to lose any jot or tittle of experience. And we see what we can see. Our eyes are about as good as Sam Weller's. Said the lawyer to Sam: "You saw nothing of this. Have you a pair of eyes?" And Sam replied for most of us: "Yes, I have a pair of eyes, and that's just it. If they was a pair o'patent double million magnifyin' gas microscopes of hextra power, p'raps I might be able to see through a flight o'stairs...but bein' only eyes, my wision's limited." We know there is more in experience than has yet been dreamed of in literature. But as deep and wide an ocean as experience is, literature still manages to record the echo-soundings of the nature of the world, our place in it, our attitude toward it. Much as we know that no piece of writing can be a substitute for actual experience, we also know that our direct participation in experience often leaves something to be desired. We find ourselves so immersed in facts and things that our perspective becomes distorted, and consequently, like Sam Weller, we fail to see what is to be seen because our vision is limited.

So it is that in our complex society the writer fuctions as in degree he has always ffunctioned. He is our in-seeing eye and, by the forms of his art, he

focusses our multi-dimensional relationships on experience. The playwright Arthur Miller tells us that on his visit to Salem for the first time in the spring of 1952, he went to the library to study the town records for 1692. While working at his desk he saw two middle-aged couples come in to see the pins with which the 'spirits' pricked the children during the shocking witchcraft episode. The pins were not here, the couples were told, but in the Courthouse. So the couples went in search of them, passing the exhibits and relics of the past. "The tourists pass the books, the exhibits and no hint of danger reaches them from the quaint relics," remarked Arthur Miller. "I have a desire to tell them the significance of those relics. It is the desire to write." In a sense each of us is a tourist looking only for the sensational high spots, passing the books and the exhibits and no hint of danger reaches us until savage and forbidding accusations make each of us, like Joseph Kay in Kafka's The Trial, stand up straight knowing that he too might be called next to testify or to stand trial. So in Arthur Miller's "The Crucible", or William Faulkner's "The Bear", or Robert Frost's "Directive", the playwright, the novelist and the poet are our in-seeing eyes (and, of course, they are much more than this) acting as counter-forces to man's incurable habitualness, not, heaven be praised, making irrational what is rational, and neither destroying what is carefully planned, nor roiling what is clear. But rather in the world of their art redeeming in wonder the finiteness of human insensibility. They impose an order of clarification upon the scrambled fractions of existence and work out a whole number, no matter how small it is relative to life's advanced algebra. This they do by altering the angle of focus. By the illusion of a reduced dimension, which is a play, story, poem, novel, essay, the writer enables us to see more. By bringing the chaotic to heel he restores the devitalized to life, the blurred to clarity, the faded

to freshness in the paradoxically reduced but wonderful dimension of art.

"Life," says Virginia Woolf, "is like a blind and limitless expanse of sky, forever dividing into tiny drops of circumstance that rain down, thick and fast, a ceaseless, meaningless drip. Art is like the dauntless plastic force that builds up stubborn, amorphous substance, cell by cell, into the frail geometry of a shell." Or, as Robert Frost says, "the thing that art does for life is to clean it, to strip it to form." Mrs. Woolf emphasizes the organizing and constructive power of art - "the dauntless plastic force"; Mr. Frost stresses the disciplinary and clarifying power of art. "Let chaos storm! / Let cloud shapes swarm! / I wait for form," says Mr. Frost.

Now, at last we have come to the really difficult part of this talk. How is this discussion directly related to us? What are we doing here? We have said that the English School exists for the individual - a proper come-on assumption but what does it really imply? Remember Sam Weller at the "Swarry" in Bath. To make conversation the butler asks him whether he has noticed the chalybeate in the Bath waters. "I noticed," says Sam, "a taste of warm flat-irons - but I noticed no chalybeate, and I think chalybeate is a very inexpressive word." Well, I've been seeking an expressive word to show what education ought to be doing at our level and I don't think I can beat Sam Weller. What would be the equivalent of a taste of warm flat-irons in this context? Not, surely, the compound word I've selected, but it will have to do, and at least it isn't as inexpressive as chalybeate.

The word I have in mind is self-discovery in the sense that Wallace Stevens intends when he refers to "a self that touches all edges." Education is an act of self-discovery, an act that involves our relationship to all edges of the outside world as well as to all edges of the inner world of ourselves. Here the

two worlds should be in happy conjunction. It is because we don't want to see a separation of the two worlds that we would use carefully the allusion 'magic mountain'. Here we are just far enough away to get a perspective on the world of affairs. Here for six weeks we have a chance without serious interruption to learn a little more about how to handle the tools of our learning with precision and also with delight. Graduate schools like Bread Loaf are certainly concerned with discipline, and a higher discipline in the sense of a more exacting one than at the college level, but we would make the business of handling the tools of learning not a solemn or sobersides affair. We would also have it a matter of enjoyment, especially in the art of it where art is close to play and perennially a delight of the mind and spirit. Here we try to retain the spirit of the amateur without descending to dilettantism. "Teach, stir the mind, afford enjoyment," says Ezra Pound, and he has compressed our goal in one short statement. There is a good chance that where there is conscience, which I take to be the touch of grace in the human spirit, it is possible to trust the student and the teacher and the administrative staff to do their part to keep this spirit prevalent. Let us then for our allotted six weeks, to paraphrase Henry James, walk in the world of the writer's invention with "a rage of curiosity." For out of our curiosity come the great challenges and out of the great challenges the great possibilities. Let this be the road taken to self-discovery on a mountain that is almost magic. "Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'/ Let us go and make our visit."

Seniors

1955 (17)

Allardt, Linda

Applegate, Paul

Burrows, Clark

Connor, George

Craz, Albert, President

Denison, Margaret

Feindel, Caroline

Griffith, Mrs. Anne

Harris, Una

Hart, Jane

Head, Mrs. Leonora

Jansen, Walter

Purser, David

Revell, Alexander

Shmiefsky, Marvel

Thomas, Allen

Travers, William

BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH
1955
General Statistics

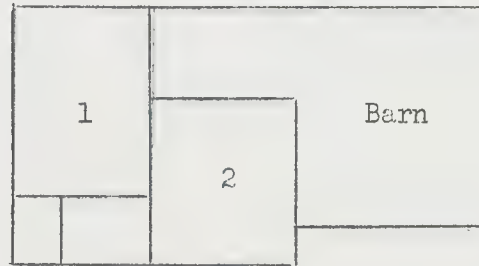
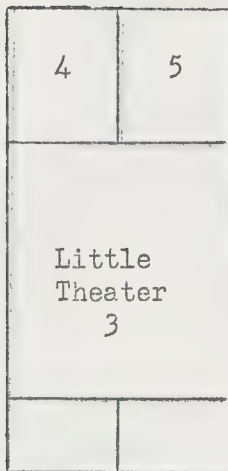
<u>Student attendance by states:</u>		Total student attendance	123
California	1	Men students	40
Colorado	1	Women students	83
Connecticut	5	Old students	66
Florida	1	New students	57
Georgia	2	Off-campus students	14
Illinois	4	Candidates for a Midd. M.A.	46
Indiana	2	Scholarship students	7
Iowa	2	Seniors	17
Kansas	1	Prospective 1956 seniors	11
Kentucky	1	Veterans	9
Maine	3	Auditors	11
Maryland	6	Working for 8 credits	6
Massachusetts	10	" " 7 "	3
Michigan	3	" " 6 "	68
Mississippi ²	2	" " 5 "	9
Missouri	2	" " 4 "	17
Nebraska	1	" " 3 "	1
New Hampshire	5	" " 2 "	7
New Jersey	11		
New York	23		
Ohio	5		
Oklahoma	1		
Pennsylvania	14		
Rhode Island	1		
No. Carolina	2		
So. Carolina	1		
Tennessee	1		
Texas	2		
Vermont	3		
Virginia	3		
Wisconsin	1		
Canada	2		
Hawaii	1		

(31 states represented)

Attendance by courses:

3	Special studies in tchg. of Eng.	7
7b	Stagecraft	14
9	Hist. of the Eng. lang.	18
10	Vict. poetry	18
14	Yeats, Eliot, Auden	36
17	Comp. & crit.	16
19	Chaucer	10
22	Aspects of the sh. st.	23
32	Milton	12
37	Repr. continental nov.	28
41	Dem. dilemma in Amer. fict.	38
46	17th C. lit.	16
86	Curr. & methods	22
92	Amer. nov. in the 20th C.	38

1955



SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

8:30 A.M.

Includes auditors

56
Course

53	86	Curriculum and Methods	43	Mr. Zahner
46	19	Chaucer	17	Mr. Anderson
33	41	Democratic Dilemma in Am. Fict.	21	Mr. Mizener
40			9	

Barn 1	Davis - L. T. 3
Barn 2	Joyce - Barn 2
Little Theater 3	Barn 1 - Baker
	Davidson - L. T. 5

9:30 A.M.

79	3	Special Studies in Tchg. of Eng.	12	Mr. Zahner
21	22	Aspects of the Short Story	52	Mr. Beck
92	46	Seventeenth Century Literature	34	Mr. Joyce
14	14	Yeats, Eliot, and Auden		Miss Drew

Little Theater 5	L. T. 5 - Kelly
Barn 1	Drew - L. T. 3
Barn 2	Brown - Barn 1
Little Theater 3	

10:30 A.M.

39	9	History of the Eng. Language	36	Mr. Anderson
10	10	Victorian Poetry	8	Mr. Jensen
11	92	Am. Novel in the 20th Century	43	Mr. Mizener

Barn 1	Davis - Barn 2
Barn 2	Joyce - L. T. 5
Little Theater 3	Baker - L. T. 3
	or Barn 1?

11:30

7a	7b	Stagecraft	12	Mr. Volkert
28	17	Composition and Criticism	29	Mr. Beck
41	32	Milton		Mr. Joyce
	37	Representative Continental Nov.	32	Mr. Jensen

Little Theater 3	L. T. 3
Barn 2	Kelly - Barn 2
Little Theater 5	
Barn 1	Brown - Barn 1

8
7
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1

Bread Loaf School of English
MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE
Middlebury, Vermont
July 1, 1955

This is a tentative program of the lectures and entertainments to be offered at the English School this summer. In general, the lectures will begin at 7:30 p.m. and the plays at 8:30. You are cordially invited to attend as often as you may be interested to.

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|----------|--|
| July 5 | Irving Howe: "The 20th Century Political Novel--Malraux, Silone, and Koestler" |
| July 11 | Mrs. Sharry Underwood: A dance and poetry recital |
| July 22 | Three one-act plays |
| August 1 | Alfred Kazin: "What Prose Can Do" |
| August 5 | A three-act play |

Bread Loaf School of English

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
August 13, 1955

Warren Beck

Honored though I am by this appointment, I have faced the hour with some misgivings. Here where I have met so many classes, in which many of you have taken part, I now feel the lack on this lectern of somebody else's page to explicate. That place and persons are so familiar makes my present role seem the more strange. I am reminded of the curate in Love's Labour's Lost who goes dumb when he tries to play Alexander the Great in the masque for the king, whereupon the clown Costard calls the frightened actor "a foolish mild man; an honest man, look you, and soon dash'd. He is a marvelous good neighbor, faith, and a very good bowler, but for Alisander--alas! you see how 'tis--a little o'erparted."

In considering what part one who is not even a very good bowler might take upon himself tonight, I remembered that an English scholar, under full academic auspices, once delivered a lecture on lectures; and so I thought at first of a commencement address on commencement addresses. But not for long. One plain deterrent is the sad example of too many sonnets on the sonnet. And in the light of Mencken's "Criticism of Criticism of Criticism" who would carelessly set going a practice which, since way leads on to way, might ramify into a commencement address on commencement addresses on the same?

Moreover, in such a happy hour as this the data of baccalaureate orations are too dismal to ponder at length. Of what may it be symptomatic that the climax of the educative process, whether in schools, colleges, or universities, so often occasions a grand finale of platitude, uttered in the dread voice of vested seniority? This phenomenon was underlined several years ago when The New Yorker, in one of its tangential championings of rationality, set forth a "handy compendium"

of plethoric dicta from such discourses. These mauve passages are of an immense and unspecific gravity. While the then president of Yale questioned "whether we must resign ourselves to a completer socialization," at Brown the graduates were weightily advised to "apply wisdom to the problems of the world," but the then president of Dartmouth more stoically charged his men to "endure hardness." The dean at Hamilton, demonstrating that the preceptor need not be the exemplar, counseled his audience to "spend more time in silence," whereas the president of Rochester thought it now expedient to tell his departing students that "sales resistance is an asset." A former president of Middlebury chose this season when swarms of graduates were being loosed on society to warn that "the lunatic fringe is steadily widening."

The New Yorker's handy compendium also suggests a standard practice by such phrases as "the crying need in life" and "the crucial problem in our times." Into such altitudes I do not love to soar, nor could I if I wished. "Old men and comets," says Swift, "have been revered for the same reason: their long beards and pretenses to foretell events." I shall not beard you with any such pretenses. I trust it will not seem a breach of contract if I do not try to play Alexander, or even in any less aggressive guise pronounce any world views. Such as I have I need for my own troubled use, and I'm afraid too that if I brought them out into the night air they might come unstuck. Anyhow, with this linguistically tempered audience the conventional proposition that your future lies before you too obviously risks the retort, "Where else?" I would avoid also the fashion of going all metaphorical over the occasions suits and trappings, such as the diploma, which cartoonists represent as a magic carpet, or, this season, with exquisite topicality, as barrel of a rifle held by a gowned graduate over whose shoulder bends no less a mentor than Davy Crockett. Expect then no stern command or monitory voice from one who is not even an occasional orator but only an unreconstructed English teacher.

Which, I believe, is what most of you are too. I take it that in your graduate studies here at Bread Loaf you have been not so much reconstructed as confirmed. Therefore I would talk briefly and as to colleagues in the enterprise of English teaching, concerning what may "establish, strengthen, settle" us, considering how what we are settled on, and settled in, may strengthen us against what it may sometimes seem we must settle for. It would be presumptuous, I think, for me to address you in any other terms. You are not ordinary students, still untried in the workaday world. You are professionals, who have not traded off liberal learning for a facile professionalism or any plainer cynicism. I for one am admiringly conscious of your patient merit, your preservation of a saving ardor in an arduous vocation. Most of you have felt and are to feel again those upper and nether millstones, the sometimes seemingly impervious adolescent and the sometimes really abrasive administrator. Thus tried, you have remained true, as is shown by your love of letters and your concern for their uncompromised use in education. It is to be hoped that your devotion in these matters has been quickened at Bread Loaf, but it was not born here. It was the directive which sent you up the mountain to this remote and dedicated place.

The Bread Loaf School of English. Trying once to describe it to a Midwestern friend, I said it combined certain advantages of a monastery and a house party. It does afford a retreat for earnest study and meditation; it does foster the association of kindred spirits. How then are we to part from this lively companionship and go down from this lofty retreat and not suffer a melancholy reaction? Our ears sense the increase of pressure on the rapid decline in Ripton Gorge or from the Middlebury Gap; we'll feel it in our bones, too, for days. Thus the very world, where we will be dispersed before another sundown, may seem more than ever to abound in brute contradictions.

To face these will be the lesson for tomorrow, and for next month. It would

be unfortunate if our sojourn here and all our transcendental travels into literature's goodly states were to alienate us from American society. There can be such a danger. It enters any intellectual's experience in a civilization preoccupied with physical comforts and standardized entertainment; and for us teachers it becomes, more acutely, an occupational hazard. How shall we impress the richly variable line of blank verse upon a generation gone on this season's automobile designs? How engage an appreciative attention to Virginia Woolf's prose, or Donne's or Addison's or Thoreau's, when the mean of style is set by the popular vocalist's smearing of melody and rhythm? When all such seems too much for us, how refrain from withdrawals that are not even tactical--escapes into antiquarianism or sub-marginal specialization, where one can play all by oneself, or more supinely, a perpetual resting of the case on somebody else's word for it, embalmed in sere and yellow notes? Most do try to face the English teacher's pressing tasks more responsibly and with wider cultural relevance, but may pause nonplussed at the edge of the chasm between Emerson and Winchell, George Eliot and Mickey Spillane. Thus beset, as still we wearily insist on a semicolon or save Ben Jonson once more from that extra letter in his name, we may be visited by mortal intimations that our assiduity smacks of busyness.

These hazards and others must leave some mark, for the English teacher is often glanced at with a mingling of distrustful aloofness and amused tolerance. Do we seem to the laity a quaint tribe, proffering not too confidently our pouncet boxes of desiccated lavender from the anthologies, or else living to chide austere the misplaced modifier? Martinet or fifty-minute retailer of dead men's passions, must the English teacher be one? Of course we have all known them, the inveterate classroom rhapsodist tolerated with habitual inattention, or the full-standing member of our guild who walks, as Walter Bagehot suggested, "as if he were in awe of being himself." Yet we know that the crux of the matter

is not what caricaturists may make of the schoolmarm or the professor, it is what we think about it. Do we see ourselves caught between irreconcilable contradictions that may isolate us in artificialities, or are we vitally involved in a not altogether intractable and possibly fruitful complexity?

The contradictions do loom formidably, and when we muse too curiously in any twilight of the spirit, they may cast shadows that elongate into bogies. One of the most disconcerting at present grows from the opposition between perfected literary art and a debasing of communication under the slogan of so-called "communications." This bright new sociological concept, so deferential to the machine age's mass media, may be made an accessory to the blunting of intellectual and emotional discriminations. Simplicity is a shining virtue, and a continent style can best transmit the pure light of mind; but a possible simplicity is always relative to substance, and this plain fact gets thrust aside by false leveling processes. Some readers choose to believe that if a page is hard, the author is at fault; he is charged with wilful obscuration by those who themselves are excessively simple. There is a round answer; let the plaintiff recast the passage more simply without losing any shade of meaning. Whoever rejects this principle cannot be brought into communion with the realities of literature, nor can his thinking and self-expression go far until he learns regard for the resources of language. Our opportunity is to persuade receptive students that since literary art rests upon whatever shades of meaning the artist chooses to deal with, his elucidation may involve elaboration, implication may have to take over beyond definition, and condensation without loss is to be had, if at all, only by the most precise diction the language affords. This is not to deny that the improvement of communication among the masses of humanity is a "crucial problem in our times," and as such it could furnish forth a thundering commencement address, on the theme that the basic curse was not mankind's sentence to hard labor but the multiplication of tongues. In our more particular practice, however, we must

defend literature against that vogue of digest and simplification which trims the living tree down to a dead trunk and bleaches the picture back to a sketchy outline.

Another difficulty in our path is the contradiction between rhetoric, in the fine ancient sense, and the modern mode of discontinuity, which has been set going by a hit-and-run journalism and has become the shoddy stock-in-trade of the comedian who fills his little amplified hour with calculated interruption as a frivolous escapism. Comedy in the tradition has treated irrationality with the correctives of real satire; nowadays our popular arts often seem to propose that since we are all blundering asses, we may as well laugh and be incoherently merry together about it. As an anodyne it is perhaps the poor man's equivalent of theology's comforting rediscovery of original sin, and indeed it has had a counterpart among the literati of a naturalism tinged with perverse satisfaction over folly. Certainly on bad nights the English teacher may wonder how to elicit any real perception from tomorrow's class, debauched as they may be from assisting at those all-American spectacles one is tempted to call untruth and inconsequentiality. Here the height of the common man's fortune and felicity is to be picked for the full treatment, in which the amateur who proves himself a good average joe by coming up with the wrong answers gets his multiple reward: something in the way of a hotfoot or other grotesque indignity; plus something to bring the eternal note of lewdness in, such as a large economy-size kiss from a movie starlet; plus something for the participant's sweet little home, possibly an oversize refrigerator with a year's supply of name-brand frozen raspberry juice. All this, even all this, can scarcely be what the poet had in mind as "joy in widest commonalty spread."

"You see how 'tis"--what appears an era of clowning may provoke an unreconstructed and admittedly old-fashioned English teacher to a rebuttal in kind. Yet

if this is not altogether such an age, neither do its anxieties commonly incline men toward the scrutinies, precisions, and projections of genuine literature. Instead, the wide-spread desire, pathetic in its dependence, is for soothing illusions, reassuringly stated in clichés. Thus the English teacher is explicitly contradicted by a predominance of slick fiction--with its guaranteed high glamor content and fortified sentimentality, in those dispensable containers, the magazines Boy Scouts collect for pulping into new paper on which more certified romance can be stamped, thereby suggesting another closed circle in the conservation of matter, another stubborn fact of nature--and of human nature? Arnold's favorite bishop, who rhetorically asked why men should wish to be deceived, did not stay for psychiatry's specialized answer; but while English teachers cannot rest in the rational cleric's enlightenment, neither do they readily consent to a scientifically limited view of personality. That men--and presumably women--wish to be deceived or at least bemused is the basic principle of commercialized fiction, of fabrication all compact, and the vogue of its spurious delights, together with the movies' adaptations thereof, brings the teacher of literature into a conflict with the society he would serve.

Coming even closer home, the whole pseudo-democratic theory of education, that everybody should be run through the same mill, a process geared to the norm of a passive mediocrity, accentuates the general trend toward blurry indolence of mind. Not that we should be surprised by that tendency, scandalized though we are by the educators who make hay on the strength of it. It is indeed natural always for average men to avoid the strain of serious reflection and to seek unphilosophic consolations. Nevertheless we who would propagate the best that has been thought and thereby also induct the young into the liberalizing disciplines of language must regret that so many Americans let indiscriminateness and irresponsibility flourish in them in a natural weedy way, under a climate more favor-

able to such growth than to that we would foster. Yet if literature has brought us closer to our kind and has taught us wider compassion, as it should, we will desist from even a mild cynicism or intermittent condescension about the nature of man, and while sensing more deeply the rigors and the pathos of existence, will know also its recurrent promise.

If we were to take it as the unamenable spirit of the age that "malt does more than Milton can," what then would become of our world, which stretches beyond the valley of the present into those broad uplands whose map is the whole history of literature? We cannot surrender that, now when the American democracy we have volunteered to serve so perilously lacks a dynamic sense of tradition. Furthermore, we know that the historian cannot do it alone; the humane ideal which underlies democracy needs certain illuminations from literature. Which is where we English teachers come in unequivocally, for however little honor a prophet may be accorded in his own country, it is there he is called to bear testimony. So that is part of what awaits us, after this interlude of refreshment. We cannot stay on indefinitely at Bread Loaf, not only because house-parties must end but because it is the purpose of retreats to send one back into the world, not to be passively of it, but to confront it beneficently with renewed faith.

I shall not presume to state that creed. Our congregation asks each of us to define faith vitally for himself, beyond the bare bones of curriculum and syllabi or the aridities of a philosophy of education. Such definition of faith presupposes a decision, not new but renewed, that we will not defer to what may seem insurmountable contradictions, but will continue to proclaim a systematic cultural view and intention. On this one point we need to be fundamentalists, and if we would borrow a first article for our personal creeds, perhaps we can find nothing more explicit and comprehensive than Santayana's declaration: "The ideal is a function of reality." Some may wish to complement Santayana with a note from Carlyle, who, even though the Germans caught him so early, remained canny

enough to observe that "the Ideal always has to grow in the Real, and to seek out its bed and board there." As for texts and touch-stones, though, there is no page of enduring literature which will not demonstrate the transcendence of art as it confronts natural confusions with imaginative affirmations, and summons in-to being, out of the flux of obstinate circumstance, whole areas of intellectual order and complete works of beauty.

The assertion of such values is the heart of the matter for us teachers. Rather than apologizing for our traditional wares, then, or compromising with encroachments of mediocrity, we can be most confident and of clearest conscience when we are promulgating the choicest literature, believing as we must that the best, whether as high seriousness or high comedy, derives its ideal greatness from correspondence to the largest and most abiding realities. In this we will not be escapists, but explorers of all the resources of the humane, and advocates thereof.

Which is what our masters, the great men of letters, have been and are. Thus though one may deprecate any classroom eclipse of literature itself by biography, the English teacher does well to know enough of the lives of writers to assure him that they were men of like joys and sorrows, beset like us by the contradictions between materiality and mind, and achieving their art out of the very stress of that conflict. Remembering how Bacon's thirst for an ornate success in a glittering world led him into a worldly disgrace, we can read with deeper understanding and a more sober edification his words on wisdom for a man's self, and on truth. Though Milton prescribed that the poet's life should be a poem, and presumably a good one, in his own existence what passages as dreary as some in his masterpiece, yet who has made more visible the darkness of egotism, as he made clearer too that "Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell." Dr. Jonson's brass-bound heartiness of intellect, we will recall, did not come easy;

it had to break through melancholia, and it did. Thoreau's lusty cock-crow was neither an eccentric's showing off nor an escapist's back-flung jeer; it was the voice of one who "in any weather, at any hour of the day or night," he says, was "anxious to improve the nick of time . . . to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and the future . . . to toe that line." And even Walt Whitman, who arrives at his centenary a bit disheveled and puffing a little, but still in fairly sound shape—we remember wryly how Walt could be most peremptory when he was being most provincial, summoning the muse to "migrate from Greece and Ionia" and "placard 'Removed' and 'To Let' on the rocks of . . . snowy Parnassus," and even imagining her "smiling and pleased with palpable intent to stay . . . here, installed amidst the kitchen-ware," and we see therein Walt's bachelorish ignorance of any lady's natural wish to go on living in nothing less than her accustomed style, and also any woman's sensible unwillingness to spend needless time over the stove; but as we know, the muse in characteristic fashion surprised him too, by coming out of the kitchen and meeting him under the lilac bush, with a true mistress's lovely forgiveness and favor.

The tensions implicit in the artistic venture take many forms. It was with actual groanings that Conrad arrived at le mot juste and achieved his magnificent housings of whole stories. On the road less traveled by where our great poet chose to go there must have been desolate stretches, beyond which he trod ahead, to our delight. And our delight, we thus note, is always purchased by the poet's resolution, not only in the sense of purpose but of function--solving the complex equations between actualities and ideals, moderating the fevers of existence into norms of a perceptive sanity, modulating dissonances into a tonic outcome. Thus however particular any artist's experience, every resounding work of art exemplifies the human imagination's power to create, to bring diverse elements into order and into a light showing the goodness of that order, and grace in its attainment.

And these are not fragments with which we shore up a ruin; these are the rightly quarried stones of our house.

Though "poet" is a most august title in its original sense of "maker," the literary artist is indeed a man among men, and must be, especially by his drastic involvement in complications of the actual and the ideal. No one can be less exempt from these stresses than he, and indeed if anything is to differentiate the poet from comparatively uncultivated men, it is his more acute view of experience and his more enterprising response. Since art asserts the paradox that although mind is impinged upon by materiality and mutability, it can also dominate them by creative projections, the teacher's advocacy of art can be a front-line service in the long campaign of civilization, which is fundamentally a work of imagination. With multiple instances of great literature supporting us, we teachers see that our dilemma is not just ours, but is that on which art itself has turned, since it is inherent in the life of man. Pending a time when every valley shall be exalted, we are all doomed to our ups and downs, but literature assures us that the productive confrontation of complexity is not only within the range of autonomous creative mind, but is its given function. There are "spots of time," and there can be "epiphanies" in the Joycean sense; and these constitute compass points and seasonal signs for the teacher in his labors.

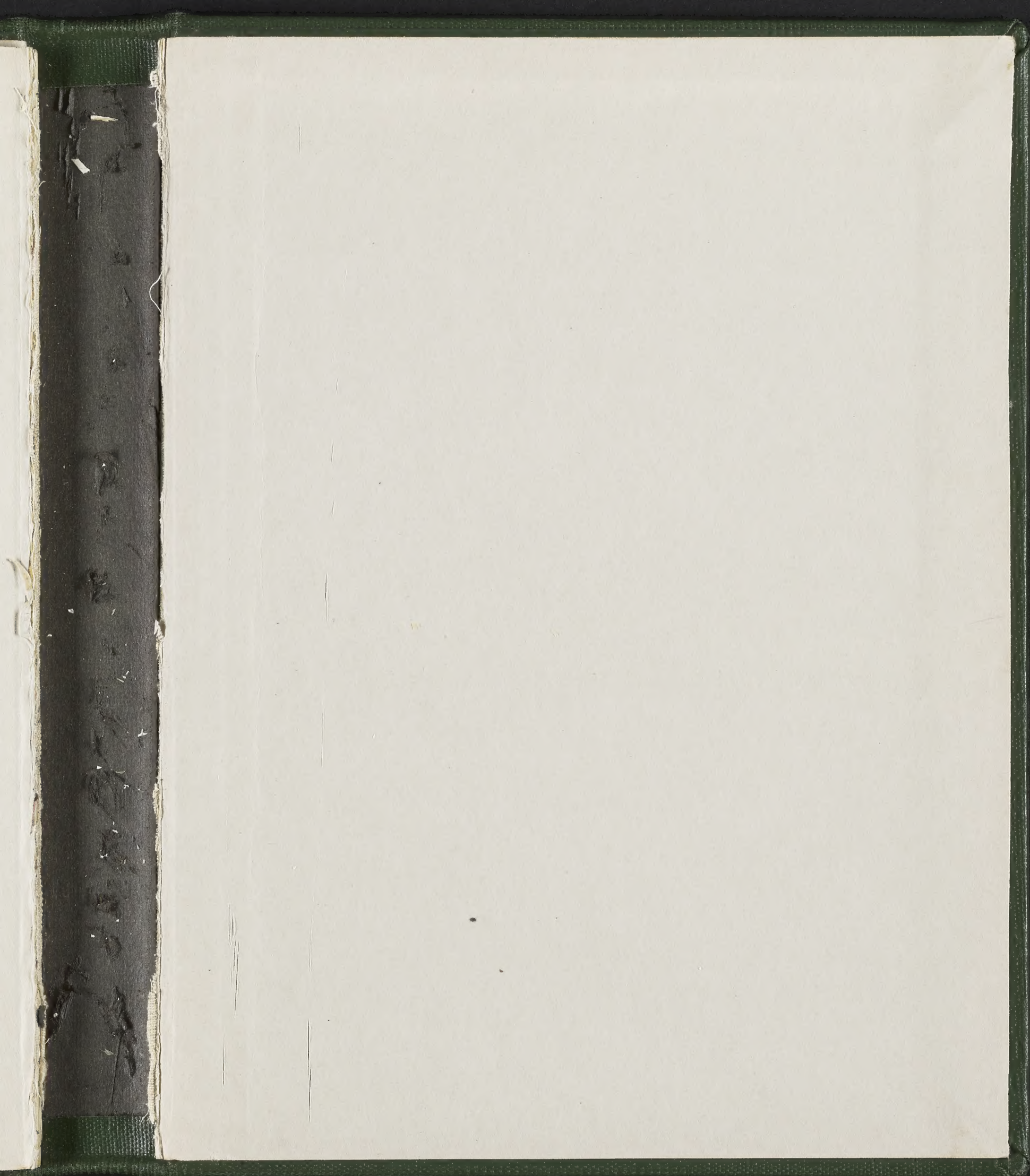
If we do our work at all well, we will receive sufficient assurance from some whom we teach, as new entities of literature come within their ken and they truly respond. Even when their answering may be "a wild surmise" we can be better nominalists than to suppose that if stout Cortez didn't know it was the Pacific Ocean he was staring at, he didn't see anything, and so with them. Besides, remembering our own experience of art, we can trust to more than what we can see in our students, since any reader's deepest awakenings are solely heartfelt, and may be both delayed and cumulative. At any rate, to guide students toward further ranges and

to train them to stake out their findings as language allows is the best we can do for them, and the only real leaven we can introduce into society. Knowing literature, we will know that an attempt to dispense it more widely by watering it down or to make English studies easy by resorting to the sub-literary or condoning semi-literacy is to parody our subject's unique qualities and to stultify its essential uses. We dare not substitute or over-simplify; all we can do is to begin upon simpler phases of the real thing, without obscuring classic essences or delaying further access to literature's exactitudes and symmetries, its illuminating imaginativeness, and its humane relevance.

Not that we can think continuously of the greatness of literature, much less be always talking of it. For one thing, there are faculty meetings and similar chores in the getting of bed and board, and visits to the dentist and shoe-strings to replace; and in life, as in the dramas which mirror it, intensity must fluctuate. But we can turn again with faith to that which we truly honor, and to its advocacy, which is our work. Living, as Wordsworth said, by admiration, we find that it is the only way to live, and that it can give us not merely some real hope, but what is even better than hope, a lasting love, a fondness beyond any separation.

Thus what we ask of literature and propose as the use of literature is realization, wherein Yeats' bole, leaf, and blossom or Coleridge's cloud and shower become one, thereby answering the deep human desire for integration and consonancy, upon which we can stay our minds and, as in Robert Frost's profound pun, be staid. Since ambiguities are our private delight, shall we not say then that as English teachers we aspire to be staid? It sounds indeed most proper, and we will know its true propriety.

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